



MAJOR LABOUR COSTS, PRIVATE SECTOR, AUSTRALIA, 1985-86

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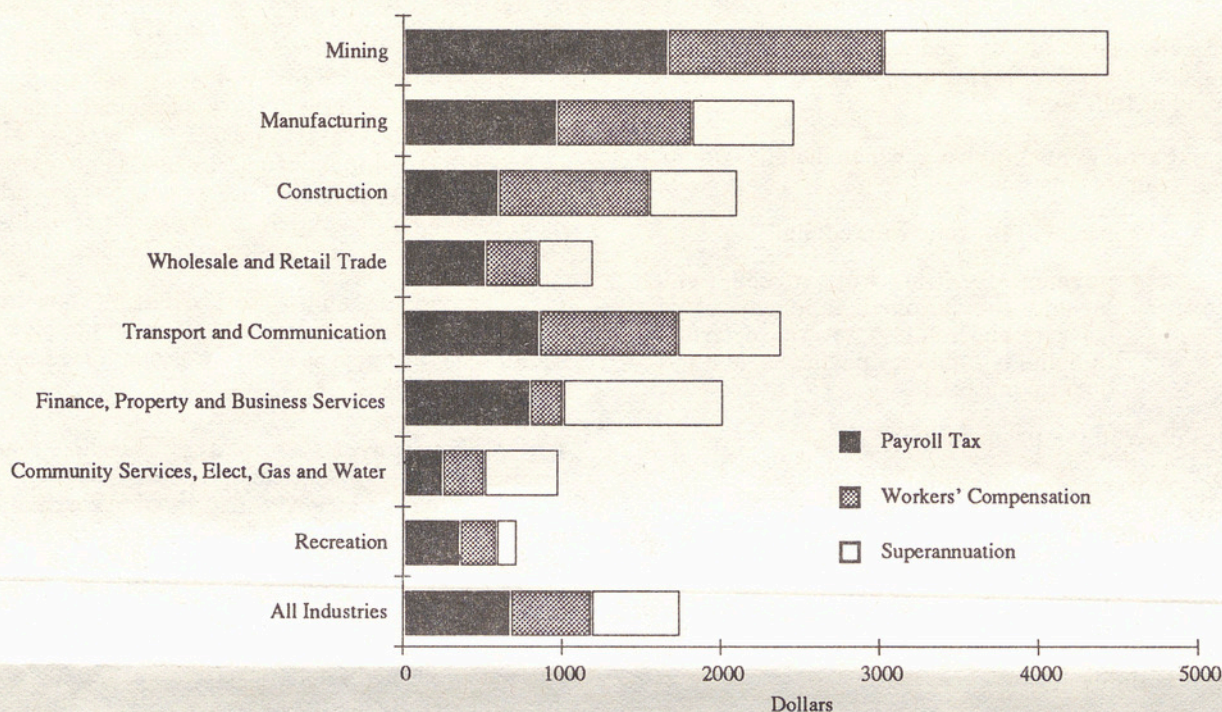
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MAIN FEATURES

MAJOR LABOUR COSTS (EXCLUDING EARNINGS) PER EMPLOYEE (\$)



In 1985-86, for each dollar private sector employers paid out for employee earnings, an additional 3.8 cents was paid in payroll tax, 3.2 cents in employer contributions to superannuation schemes, and 3.0 cents in workers' compensation costs. Together, these costs added 10.0 cents to labour costs over and above each dollar of employee earnings, and represented an average annual cost of \$1,740 per employee. Total annual major labour costs per employee including earnings were \$19,190.

Overall, the average annual costs excluding earnings per employee in the private sector amounted to \$670 for

payroll tax, \$510 for workers' compensation and \$560 for superannuation. Only 32 per cent of employees were covered by superannuation, so that the average employer contribution in 1985-86 for each employee actually in a superannuation scheme was \$1,720. Mining had the highest proportion of employees covered by superannuation (78 per cent) while Recreation had the lowest with only 7 per cent in schemes.

The Mining industry recorded the highest costs per employee, both in total (\$36,880) and for each of the individual major labour costs — employee earnings

(\$32,440); payroll tax (\$1,660); workers' compensation (\$1,360); and superannuation (\$1,420). As a proportion of earnings, the highest payroll tax payments were incurred by the Mining industry (5.1 per cent); workers' compensation costs were greatest in the Construction industry (4.8 per cent); while the highest employers' superannuation contributions were recorded in the Finance, property and business services industry (5.3 per cent).

Differences in labour costs between States are influenced by a number of factors including the payroll tax and workers' compensation arrangements in each State, the

average level of earnings and the nature and size of businesses in each State. Payroll tax payments per employee were highest in New South Wales and Victoria (each \$760), which is due in part to the higher proportion of employment in large companies in those States, and in part to the average level of earnings. These payments amounted to 4.1 per cent of earnings in New South Wales and 4.2 per cent in Victoria.

Workers' compensation costs per employee were highest in New South Wales (\$650) and lowest in Queensland (\$240). However, as a percentage of earnings they were highest in South Australia (3.6 per cent) and lowest in Queensland (1.6 per cent).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

This publication contains results of the Survey of Major Labour Costs conducted during 1986. Information was collected on the major labour costs — earnings; payroll tax; workers' compensation; superannuation; and severance, termination and redundancy payments — for the year ended 30 June 1986.

2. Labour costs are defined as all costs incurred by employers in the employment of labour, and may be classified as follows:

(a) Earnings of employees, which include two main components:

- payment for time worked; and
- payment for time not worked (which includes the various components of paid leave; public holidays; severance, termination and redundancy payments; and infrequent bonuses).

(b) Payroll tax payments.

(c) Workers' compensation.

(d) Superannuation.

(e) Fringe benefits.

(f) Welfare services.

(g) Training.

(h) Recruitment.

3. The Survey of Major Labour Costs covered only components (a) to (d), which are estimated to represent over 90 per cent of all labour costs. The survey did not collect information on the dissection of earnings into payments for time worked and time not worked (although severance, termination and redundancy payments were separately identified).

4. The survey was restricted to the private sector only. The public sector was excluded because of the variety of funding arrangements that exist for public sector superannuation and workers' compensation schemes. It was not possible, in the time available to carry out the investigations necessary to enable the information to be collected on a basis consistent with that for the private sector.

Survey design

5. The survey was conducted as a sample of approximately 5,000 employers in the private sector selected from the ABS register of businesses at May 1986. The survey covered employers in all States and industries apart from employers primarily engaged in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; private households employing staff; and overseas embassies, consulates etc.

6. The statistical unit for the survey comprised all activities of an enterprise in a particular State. Each Statistical unit was classified to an industry which reflected the predominant activity of the enterprise in the State. In a small number of cases, where an enterprise had significant employment in more than one industry, a separate statistical unit was created for each industry.

7. The statistical units were stratified by State, industry and size of employer and a simple random sample selected from each stratum. The survey was conducted by mail.

Definitions

8. *Reference year.* Information collected relates to labour costs paid during the year ended 30 June 1986, for those employers on the ABS register of businesses at May 1986. The survey excludes labour costs paid during the year by those employers who were not on the business register at May 1986. For employers who commenced or ceased operation during the year, the costs data relate to the amounts paid during the period the employer operated. The data collected relate to payments actually made by the employer during the reference year.

9. *Employees.* For the purpose of measuring labour costs, the number of employees is the annual average of the number of employees who received pay for a single reference period in August 1985, November 1985, February 1986 and May 1986. All permanent, temporary, casual, part-time, managerial and executive employees as well as employees on paid or pre-paid leave, on workers' compensation, and employees paid from interstate or overseas are included. Proprietors/partners of unincorporated businesses, directors who are not paid a salary, self-employed persons (e.g. sub-contractors) and persons paid solely by commission without a retainer are excluded.

10. *Payroll tax* refers to amounts paid during the reference year in respect of all employees, net of any rebates. Payroll tax assessed for payments to contractors is excluded.

11. *Workers' compensation* costs are determined in two ways:

- (a) The majority of employers are covered for workers' compensation through the payment of premiums to an insurer. In these cases, workers' compensation costs are determined by the premiums paid during the reference year, together with any other workers' compensation costs. Other workers' compensation costs include 'make-up' and 'excess' pay (which cover payments made by employers directly to employees over and above the amount paid in compensation by the workers' compensation insurer).
- (b) In most States, certain employers are entitled to become 'self-insurers'. Workers' compensation costs for these employers were determined by the payments actually made to employees during the reference year for workers' compensation claims, together with any other workers' compensation costs (including legal, accounting, medical and administrative costs; and 'catastrophe' insurance). Self-insurance costs relate to payments made during the reference year, not the current and future costs associated with claims made during the reference year.

12. *Superannuation costs* refer to amounts of employers' contributions paid on behalf of employees during the reference year. Two measures of superannuation costs are:

- (a) Superannuation costs per employee. This refers to superannuation costs in relation to the annual average of all employees who received pay for specified pay periods during August 1985, November 1985, February 1986 and May 1986. This includes those not covered by superannuation.
- (b) Superannuation costs per employee covered. Costs per employee are calculated using, as denominator, the number of employees covered by superannuation schemes as at a single pay period in May 1986. Percentage of employees covered is estimated by expressing the number of employees covered by superannuation at May 1986 as a percentage of the total number of employees for the same pay period.

13. *Earnings* comprise all payments made to employees during the reference year (before taxation and other deductions), and comprise ordinary time and overtime earnings; overaward payments; penalty payments, shift and other remunerative allowances; commissions and retainers; bonuses and similar payments; payments under incentive or piecework; payments under profit-sharing schemes; leave loadings; annual and long service leave payments; sick leave payments; advance and retrospective payments; salaries and fees paid to company directors

and members of boards; amounts paid to employees on workers' compensation which are not covered by insurance i.e. 'make-up' pay; and severance, termination and redundancy payments.

14. *Severance, termination and redundancy payments* refer to the amount of lump sum payments on termination made by employers to employees during the reference year. Severance, termination and redundancy payments are included as a component of earnings.

15. *Gross wages and salaries* refer to earnings less severance, termination and redundancy payments.

16. *Total labour costs* refer to the sum of earnings, payroll tax, workers' compensation and superannuation.

Labour cost measures

17. Labour costs are presented in the publication in the form of several measures:

- (a) total dollar cost for each item;
- (b) costs per employee for each item;
- (c) costs for each item as a percentage of total labour costs; and
- (d) costs for each item as a percentage of earnings.

Industry classification

18. Industry is classified according to the *Australian Standard Industrial Classification (ASIC) 1983 Edition, (1201.0)*.

Size classification

19. To derive estimates classified by size, each statistical unit in the sample was allocated a size classification based on the average number of employees for the reference year (determined by averaging the number of employees for August 1985, November 1985, February 1986 and May 1986). This size classification reflects the employment size of an enterprise in a particular State or Territory and not the employment size of an enterprise Australia wide. In the tables, the 10-19 and 20-99 ranges, include employers whose average employment was 10 or more and less than 20 employees; and 20 or more and less than 100 employees respectively.

Reliability of Estimates

20. Estimates are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. For more information refer to the Technical note.

Related publications

21. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request:

Occasional Paper No. 1986/1: Statistics on Wages, Earnings, Income and Labour Costs — A Guide to Their Concepts, Measurement and Usage — issued June 1986

Labour Statistics, Australia (6101.0) — issued annually

A Guide to Labour Statistics (6102.0) — issued February 1986

Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia (6248.0)
— issued quarterly

Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, Preliminary (6301.0)
and

Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia (6302.0)
— issued quarterly

Distribution and Composition of Employee Earnings and Hours — Australia (6306.0) — issued annually

Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia (6312.0) — issued monthly

Employment Benefits, Australia (6334.0) — issued March 1987

22. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

Unpublished statistics

23. In some cases, the ABS can make available information which is not published. This information may be made available in one or more of the following forms: microfiche, photocopy, data tape, computer printout, clerically-extracted tabulation. Generally, a charge is made for providing unpublished information. Inquiries should be made to the officer whose name appears in the *Phone Inquiries* section of the Inquiries box at the front of this publication, or to Information Services in the nearest ABS Office.

24. Unpublished information which may be available from this survey includes some limited State by industry, State by size and industry by size cross classifications. Some information on industries and employment sizes at finer levels than those included in the published tables may also be available.

Symbols and other usages

- nil or rounded to zero
- * subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See the Technical note.

25. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

Electronic services

26. VIATEL. Key *656# for selected current economic, social and demographic statistics.

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IAN CASTLES
Australian Statistician

TABLE 1 MAJOR LABOUR COSTS : STATES AND TERRITORIES
1985-86

Type of cost	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Australia
COSTS (\$ million)									
Earnings	24,666	17,086	8,494	5,029	5,716	1,465	499	693	63,649
Gross wages and salaries	24,034	16,749	8,364	4,924	5,594	1,439	489	676	62,269
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	632	338	129	105	121	26	10	*	1,380
Other labour costs	2,703	1,770	613	516	505	132	43	62	6,343
Payroll tax	1,016	721	250	171	182	53	17	17	2,427
Workers' compensation	867	481	133	182	149	30	16	19	1,876
Superannuation	820	568	230	163	174	49	10	26	2,040
Total labour costs	27,369	18,856	9,107	5,546	6,221	1,596	542	755	69,993
COSTS PER EMPLOYEE									
—dollars—									
Earnings	18,360	17,900	15,630	16,580	16,700	16,570	18,060	15,730	17,450
Gross wages and salaries	17,890	17,550	15,400	16,230	16,340	16,280	17,690	15,330	17,070
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	470	350	240	350	350	290	370	*	380
Other labour costs	2,020	1,860	1,120	1,700	1,480	1,480	1,560	1,390	1,740
Payroll tax	760	760	460	560	530	590	610	390	670
Workers' compensation	650	500	240	600	440	340	590	420	510
Superannuation	610	600	420	540	510	550	360	580	560
Total labour costs	20,370	19,750	16,760	18,280	18,170	18,050	19,620	17,130	19,190
—per cent—									
Superannuation—									
Employees covered	34.0	35.3	27.4	31.5	26.8	34.7	18.5	29.2	32.3
—dollars—									
Cost per employee covered	1,780	1,660	1,510	1,730	1,910	1,560	1,960	1,950	1,720
COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOUR COSTS									
Earnings	90.1	90.6	93.3	90.7	91.9	91.8	92.1	91.8	90.9
Gross wages and salaries	87.8	88.8	91.8	88.8	89.9	90.2	90.1	89.5	89.0
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	2.3	1.8	1.4	1.9	2.0	1.6	1.9	*	2.0
Other labour costs	9.9	9.4	6.8	9.4	8.1	8.2	7.9	8.2	9.1
Payroll tax	3.7	3.8	2.8	3.1	2.9	3.3	3.1	2.3	3.5
Workers' compensation	3.2	2.6	1.5	3.3	2.4	1.9	3.0	2.5	2.7
Superannuation	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.8	3.0	1.8	3.4	2.9
Total labour costs	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF EARNINGS									
Payroll tax	4.1	4.2	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.4	2.5	3.8
Workers' compensation	3.5	2.8	1.6	3.6	2.6	2.1	3.3	2.7	3.0
Superannuation	3.3	3.3	2.7	3.2	3.1	3.3	2.0	3.7	3.2
Other labour costs	10.9	10.3	7.3	10.2	8.9	9.0	8.7	8.9	10.0

TABLE 2 MAJOR LABOUR COSTS : AUSTRALIA 1985-86
INDUSTRY

Type of cost	Mining	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail	Transport and communication	Finance property and business services	Community services, electricity, gas and water	Recreation	Total all industries
COSTS (\$ million)									
Earnings	2,447	19,556	3,922	16,104	3,060	9,363	6,178	3,019	63,649
Gross wages and salaries	2,381	19,059	3,868	15,739	3,001	9,156	6,092	2,974	62,269
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	66	497	54	365	59	207	87	45	1,380
Other labour costs	335	2,400	410	1,305	344	977	379	194	6,343
Payroll tax	125	935	115	559	123	383	93	95	2,427
Workers' compensation	103	833	186	362	126	101	102	63	1,876
Superannuation	107	632	109	384	95	493	184	36	2,040
Total labour costs	2,782	21,956	4,331	17,408	3,404	10,341	6,558	3,214	69,993
COSTS PER EMPLOYEE									
—dollars—									
Earnings	32,440	20,060	20,080	14,550	21,210	19,230	15,750	11,120	17,450
Gross wages and salaries	31,570	19,550	19,810	14,220	20,800	18,800	15,530	10,950	17,070
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	870	510	280	330	410	430	220	170	380
Other labour costs	4,440	2,460	2,100	1,190	2,380	2,010	970	710	1,740
Payroll tax	1,660	960	590	510	850	790	240	350	670
Workers' compensation	1,360	850	950	330	870	210	260	230	510
Superannuation	1,420	650	560	350	660	1,010	470	130	560
Total labour costs	36,880	22,530	22,180	15,730	23,590	21,230	16,720	11,840	19,190
—per cent—									
Superannuation—									
Employees covered	77.7	48.4	39.0	22.2	33.5	37.2	20.5	7.3	32.3
—dollars—									
Cost per employee covered	1,850	1,350	1,370	1,560	1,990	2,650	2,250	1,800	1,720
COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOUR COSTS									
Earnings	88.0	89.1	90.5	92.5	89.9	90.5	94.2	93.9	90.9
Gross wages and salaries	85.6	86.8	89.3	90.4	88.2	88.5	92.9	92.5	89.0
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	2.4	2.3	1.2	2.1	1.7	2.0	1.3	1.4	2.0
Other labour costs	12.1	11.0	9.4	7.5	10.1	9.5	5.8	6.1	9.1
Payroll tax	4.5	4.3	2.6	3.2	3.6	3.7	1.4	3.0	3.5
Workers' compensation	3.7	3.8	4.3	2.1	3.7	1.0	1.6	2.0	2.7
Superannuation	3.9	2.9	2.5	2.2	2.8	4.8	2.8	1.1	2.9
Total labour costs	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF EARNINGS									
Payroll tax	5.1	4.8	2.9	3.5	4.0	4.1	1.5	3.2	3.8
Workers' compensation	4.2	4.3	4.8	2.2	4.1	1.1	1.7	2.1	3.0
Superannuation	4.4	3.2	2.8	2.4	3.1	5.3	3.0	1.2	3.2
Other labour costs	13.7	12.3	10.5	8.1	11.2	10.5	6.2	6.5	10.0

TABLE 3 MAJOR LABOUR COSTS : AUSTRALIA 1985-86
EMPLOYER SIZE(a)

<i>Type of cost</i>	<i>Less than 10</i>	<i>10-19</i>	<i>20-99</i>	<i>100 or more</i>	<i>Total all sizes</i>
COSTS (\$ million)					
Earnings	12,599	5,632	14,121	31,297	63,649
Gross wages and salaries	12,408	5,556	13,797	30,508	62,269
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	*	76	324	789	1,380
Other labour costs	801	426	1,373	3,745	6,343
Payroll tax	63	117	627	1,621	2,427
Workers' compensation	298	154	404	1,020	1,876
Superannuation	440	155	342	1,104	2,040
Total labour costs	13,400	6,058	15,493	35,042	69,993
COSTS PER EMPLOYEE					
<i>—dollars—</i>					
Earnings	14,520	16,410	17,460	19,230	17,450
Gross wages and salaries	14,300	16,190	17,060	18,750	17,070
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	*	220	400	480	380
Other labour costs	920	1,240	1,690	2,310	1,740
Payroll tax	70	340	770	1,000	670
Workers' compensation	340	450	500	630	510
Superannuation	510	450	420	680	560
Total labour costs	15,440	17,650	19,160	21,530	19,190
<i>—per cent—</i>					
Superannuation— Employees covered	18.2	24.4	23.6	45.9	32.3
<i>—dollars—</i>					
Cost per employee covered	2,750	1,770	1,780	1,470	1,720
COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOUR COSTS					
Earnings	94.0	93.0	91.1	89.3	90.9
Gross wages and salaries	92.6	91.7	89.1	87.1	89.0
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	*	1.3	2.1	2.3	2.0
Other labour costs	6.0	7.0	8.8	10.7	9.1
Payroll tax	0.5	1.9	4.0	4.6	3.5
Workers' compensation	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.9	2.7
Superannuation	3.3	2.6	2.2	3.2	2.9
Total labour costs	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF EARNINGS					
Payroll tax	0.5	2.1	4.4	5.2	3.8
Workers' compensation	2.4	2.7	2.9	3.3	3.0
Superannuation	3.5	2.8	2.4	3.5	3.2
Other labour costs	6.4	7.6	9.7	12.0	10.0

(a) See Explanatory Notes, paragraph 19.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Reliability of Estimates

Estimates in this publication are subject to sampling variability because they are based on information relating to a sample of employers rather than a full enumeration (i.e. they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the information had been obtained from all private employers). This difference, called sampling error, should not be confused with inaccuracies which may occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents or in processing by ABS; such inaccuracy is referred to as non-sampling error and may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or sample. Efforts have been made to reduce non-sampling error by careful design of questionnaires, detailed checking of returns and quality control of processing.

2. The sampling error associated with any estimate can be estimated from the sample results. One measure of sampling error is given by the standard error which indicates the degree to which an estimate may vary from the value that would have been obtained from a full enumeration (the 'true' figure). There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate differs from the true value by less than one standard error, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

3. Another measure of sampling variability is the *relative standard error* which is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate to which it refers. The relative standard error is a useful measure in that it provides an immediate indication of the percentage errors likely to have occurred due to sampling.

4. Relative standard errors on estimates of costs as a percentage of total labour costs for States, industries and different employer sizes are given in Tables A, B and C.

5. An example of the use of these tables is as follows. Workers' compensation in New South Wales is estimated to represent 3.2 per cent of total labour costs. The relative standard error is approximately 2.7 per cent. Therefore there are 2 chances in 3 that a complete collection would give an estimate in the range of 3.1 per cent to 3.3 per cent and there are 19 chances in 20 that the estimate from a complete collection would be in the range of 3.0 per cent to 3.4 per cent.

6. Relative standard errors for estimates of costs as a percentage of earnings are approximately the same as shown in the tables, while relative standard errors for total dollar costs and costs/employee estimates are a little higher than those shown in the tables.

TABLE A. RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS: COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOUR COSTS, STATES AND TERRITORIES

	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>	<i>Australia</i>
Earnings	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.1
Gross wages and salaries	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	1.1	0.1
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	9.6	4.8	8.1	8.4	7.1	11.2	7.6	44.4	4.8
Other labour costs	1.6	1.9	2.8	2.6	3.2	3.7	3.1	5.9	1.0
Payroll tax	1.7	2.1	3.2	3.9	3.2	3.5	4.6	8.1	1.1
Workers' compensation	2.7	2.6	4.2	5.1	3.7	6.1	6.2	6.0	1.5
Superannuation	4.4	5.1	6.2	6.2	8.9	8.9	10.4	11.1	2.5

TABLE B. RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS: COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOUR COSTS, AUSTRALIA INDUSTRY

<i>Type of cost</i>	<i>Mining</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Wholesale and retail</i>	<i>Transport and communication</i>	<i>Finance property and business services</i>	<i>Community services, electricity, gas and water</i>	<i>Recreation</i>	<i>Total all industries</i>
Earnings	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1
Gross wages and salaries	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	7.9	5.8	9.0	14.6	9.8	10.2	6.7	9.6	4.8
Other labour costs	1.2	0.9	5.1	2.3	2.5	3.0	5.9	3.8	1.0
Payroll tax	0.5	1.0	7.5	2.8	3.5	2.7	13.3	5.6	1.1
Workers' compensation	2.5	1.7	7.2	2.9	6.3	6.0	6.4	5.9	1.5
Superannuation	3.3	2.9	14.4	6.7	6.1	5.9	10.5	13.5	2.5

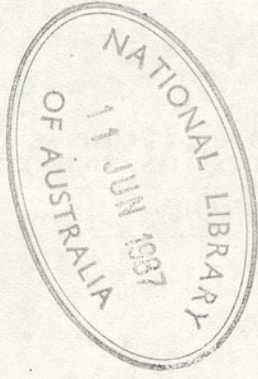
TABLE C. RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS: COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOUR COSTS, AUSTRALIA EMPLOYER SIZE(a)

	<i>Less than 10</i>	<i>10-19</i>	<i>20-99</i>	<i>100 or more</i>	<i>Total all sizes</i>
Earnings	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
Gross wages and salaries	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1
Severance, termination and redundancy payments	28.1	11.8	6.7	3.8	4.8
Other labour costs	5.0	4.8	2.0	0.8	1.0
Payroll tax	15.5	8.1	1.8	0.7	1.1
Workers' compensation	5.0	6.5	3.7	1.9	1.5
Superannuation	8.7	12.0	5.9	2.0	2.5

(a) See Explanatory Notes, paragraph 19.

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